

**Smith Peters by Warren Lazer**  
**March 5, 2018**

**What are they?**

Smith Peters are a way to signal your attitude to the opening lead. Like attitude and count signals, you can play natural or reverse Smith Peters. These notes will cover reverse Smith Peters.

**How do they work?**

When declarer is first on lead, a small card in the suit declarer plays says you like the opening lead. Conversely, a high card says you don't like the opening lead.

**Other comments**

A Smith Peter is often the first signal you will get to make on a hand, before very much is known. The sooner you can make a useful signal, the better your partnership will defend.

They can be used by both defenders.

Although many pairs only use them when defending against NT contracts, they can be used in suit contracts just as effectively.

The occasions when a count signal is absolutely essential and takes precedence are rare and obvious.

“Safe” opening leads (*e.g.* from 3 or 4 small) rather than traditional (*i.e.* from your longest and strongest suit) are becoming more popular. *Winning No Trump Leads* by Bird and Anthias supports this in theory, but assumes subsequent double dummy defense, so you need a way to tell partner that a switch is (or is not) required.

*Deadly Defence* by Izdebski, Krzemien & Klinger states Smith Peters are mandatory.

Example 1. Deadly Defence by Izdebski and Krzemien, p171

♠97  
 ♥QT2  
 ♦7654  
 ♣AKQJ  
 ♠AT842  
 ♥987  
 ♦K3  
 ♣973



West	North	East	South
	1C	P	2NT (13-15)
P	3NT	//	

You lead ♠A4. Partner plays the Jack and declarer wins the King. Declarer crosses to a club and takes a diamond finesse. On play with the ♦K, what do you do?

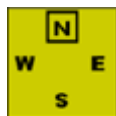
Should you play for Layout A?

♠97  
 ♥QT2  
 ♦7654  
 ♣AKQJ  
 ♠AT842  
 ♥987  
 ♦K3  
 ♣973  
 ♠K63  
 ♥A53  
 ♦AQJ2  
 ♣654  
 ♠QJ5  
 ♥KJ64  
 ♦T98  
 ♣T82



Or should you play for Layout B?

♠97  
 ♥QT2  
 ♦7654  
 ♣AKQJ  
 ♠AT842  
 ♥987  
 ♦K3  
 ♣973  
 ♠KQ3  
 ♥K43  
 ♦AQJ2  
 ♣654  
 ♠J65  
 ♥AJ65  
 ♦T98  
 ♣T82



If East plays ♣2 at trick 2, play for Layout A, continue with the ♠2.  
 If East plays ♣10 at trick 2, play for Layout B, continue with the ♥9.  
 In both cases, West should play the ♣3 at trick 2 to tell East to continue spades.

Example 2. Deadly Defence p172

♠5432  
♥9  
♦AQJT7  
♣AJ4

♠J98  
♥T653  
♦K3  
♣8763



West	North	East	South
2D (4 <sup>+</sup> H/4 <sup>+</sup> S, 6-10)	X	2H	3NT //

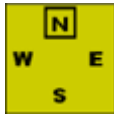
West leads the ♥4 and Declarer wins the king. At trick 2, Declarer takes the diamond finesse which loses to East's King. What should East play at trick 3?

Should East play for Layout A?

♠5432  
♥9  
♦AQJT7  
♣AJ4

♠QT76  
♥AQ742  
♦962  
♣5

♠J98  
♥T653  
♦K3  
♣8763




♠AK  
♥KJ8  
♦854  
♣KQT92

or for Layout B?

♠5432  
♥9  
♦AQJT7  
♣AJ4

♠AQT6  
♥Q8742  
♦962  
♣5

♠J98  
♥T653  
♦K3  
♣8763




♠K7  
♥AKJ  
♦854  
♣KQT92

If West plays ♦2 at trick 2, play for Layout A, continue with the ♥3  
If West plays ♦9 at trick 2, play for Layout B, continue with the ♠J.

Example 3 Australian Open Team Playoff Semi Final, Nov 2016 Set 8 Board 18

Board 18      ♣AQ  
 Dealer E      ♥J985  
 Vul N-S      ♦AQ43  
                  ♣KJT

♠98632		♠KT54
♥76		♥AQT32
♦97		♦T
♣AQ93		♣865

♠J7  
 ♥K4  
 ♦KJ8652  
 ♣742


West	North	East	South
Warren	Peter Gill	Pauline	Andrew Peake
		2D (maj, 6-10)	P
2S	2NT	P	3NT //

Partner leads the ♥3 (fourth best). Peter Gill studies dummy for a long time, eventually calls for the king and leads a club. Obviously he's trying to steal his 9<sup>th</sup> trick, so you rise with the Ace, but do you play a spade (paying partner for AQxx) or just return your heart?

If partner plays the ♣5 at trick 2, return your heart.  
 If partner plays the ♣8 at trick 2, switch to the spade.

At the other table, Beauchamp - Thomson bid and raised spades before Johnno Newman eventually declared 3NT from the North seat. A small spade lead from the King gave him his 9<sup>th</sup> trick.

Example 4 Slightly modified from Paul Lavings April 2016 talk - Defensive checklist.

	♠A76	
	♥K62	
	♦QJ98	
	♣Q75	
♠42		♠93
♥9754		♥AJT
♦A76		♦542
♣KT86		♣AJ942
	♠KQJT85	
	♥Q83	
	♦KT3	
	♣3	

West	North	East	South
		P	1S
P	3NT	P	4S //

You lead ♥5 (or 7) and it goes 2, 10, Q.

Paul was emphasising the importance of suit preference signals and advocated playing the 9 and then 3 of spades as suit preference for hearts. The same message can be sent by using Smith Peters by playing the 3 then 9 to say you like the opening lead.

But what if Declarer plays the ♦K at trick 2? You win your Ace and ?????

If partner plays the ♦2 at trick 2, play another heart.

If partner plays the ♦5 at trick 2, switch to a club.